

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0017

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONGEN HONG KONG

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 12032

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: JA, ASEAN, SOPN, ECIN

SUBJECT: PM FUKUDA'S SE ASIAN TRIP

REF: MANILA 11447

1. PM FUKUDA'S ATTENDANCE AT ASEAN SUMMIT IN KUALA LUMPUR HAS RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE IN JAPANESE MEDIA. ON WHOLE, COMMENTARY HAS BEEN FAVORABLE. MAINICHI EDITORIAL STRUCK COMMON THEME--WELCOMING FUKUDA'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH SE ASIAN COUNTRIES AND ASEAN IN PARTICULAR BUT URGING PRUDENCE THAT JAPAN NEITHER ASSUME UNWARRANTED POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC BURDENS NOR ALIENATE INDOCHINA COMMUNIST NATIONS.
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2. DURING WEEKS PRECEDING FUKUDA'S DEPARTURE, GOJ SPOKESMEN MADE MAJOR EFFORT TO BUILD UP SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS SE ASIAN TOUR, DESCRIBING IT AS "BEGINNING OF NEW ERA IN JAPANESE DIPLOMACY." WE UNDERSTAND, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY SONODA, WITH AN EYE TOWARDS PAST PRACTICE OF US

PRESIDENTS DURING ASIAN VISITS, SUGGESTED TO REPORTERS THAT PM'S SPEECH IN MANILA ON JAPANESE POLICY TOWARDS SE ASIA WOULD REPRESENT "THE FUKUDA DOCTRINE" FOR REGION.

3. DESPITE THIS PUBLICITY BUILD-UP, THERE HAS BEEN GENERAL EXPECTATION AMONG BOTH FONOFF OFFICIALS AND JAPANESE JOURNALISTS THAT, WHATEVER ITS SYMBOLIC VALUE, FUKUDA'S TRIP WOULD NOT PRODUCE ANY DRAMATIC CHANGES IN JAPANESE POLICY TOWARDS REGION. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS, BOTH FONOFF ASIAN REGIONAL POLICY DEPDIR MIYAMOTO AND POLICY PLANNING DEPDIR ASAI CONFIRMED THAT ALTHOUGH PM WOULD DISCUSS JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH SE ASIA IN HIS MANILA SPEECH (REFTEL), HE WAS NOT EXPECTED TO GO MUCH BEYOND GENERAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR REGION'S EFFORTS TOWARDS PEACE, PROSPERITY AND COOPERATION AND ASSURANCETO INDOCHINA THAT JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH ASEAN WERE NOT "ANTI-COMMUNIST" IN NATURE. ALTHOUGH MANILA SPEECH WAS NOT YET IN FINAL DRAFT, ASAI PREDICTED: "THERE WILL BE NO SURPRISES, NO BIG CHANGES AND VERY LITTLE DETAIL."

4. CONSEQUENTLY, ALTHOUGH MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN HEAVY, IT HAS FOLLOWED RATHER PREDICTABLE LINES. INDEED, YOMIURI CORRESPONDENT ADMITTED TO EMBOFF THAT SEVERAL OF HIS NEWSPAPER'S ARTICLES DATED FROM PM'S PARTY CONFIDENTIAL

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IN KUALA LUMPUR HAD BEEN WRITTEN WELL IN ADVANCE IN TOKYO.
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